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TEN YEARS' INFLUENCE OF THE REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE OF TEN

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A recent article by President Eliot, in support of certain recommendations of the Committee of Ten that had been attacked by President Hall, serves to call attention once more to that committee's report, which was, for some years at least after its appearance, the *sine qua non* of every discussion in the field of secondary-school administration. And the report well deserved the attention that it received. It was the first of the considerable number of reports upon special subjects presented by the National Educational Association, and it set a mark of excellence which it has been hard to excel. It was officially contributed to by a larger number of persons than any other document of a similar character in the whole history of education, and persons, too, than whom there are none better fitted for the work in our country or any other. The report was properly advertised—using that term in its broadest sense—through the method of the committee's appointment; and when it appeared, the teachers of the country were in a state of expectancy that insured immediate attention and the widest reading that has ever been given in this country to an educational document of its kind.

The public has now had the report for a little more than ten years; a brief chapter, to be sure, in the whole great story of educational progress, yet one in which many changes have come about in the schools.

Our educational organism, if I may be allowed the figure from the biologist, is in a condition most prolific of variation, if not sport; and herein lie our greatest hopes as well as our gravest dangers. But with this mere phrase the biological analogy breaks down, for while the biologist must patiently wait for nature to present him with variations, we men of the schools produce them at will.

The conditions that govern us in doing so are many: a peculiar

pedagogical bent, local interests, our own experience in the school-room, the experience and advice of others. It is the last of these governing conditions alone that I wish to discuss in this paper, and that solely as it has to do with the advice of the Committee of Ten.

How fully have its recommendations been followed? And as a corollary we might add the query: To what extent are we teachers willing to take advice? And still further: Do we accept it sufficiently to warrant the expenditure of time and labor necessitated by the preparation of a report like that of the Committee of Ten?

The period during which such a report is accepted merely as advice to be followed unquestioningly is comparatively short, and is for this report practically over. As a prophecy—if a valid one—it will live much longer; yet, after all, prophecies, except as they have an influence upon their own fulfilment, are of little real value and of interest only to the curious.

But to return to the direct question: What has been the influence of the Committee of Ten? Or, to state the question in another way, How fully have the changes that have taken place during the last ten years in the high-school curriculum coincided with the specific recommendations of that committee? The method that I have followed in attempting to answer these questions is wholly empirical. It consisted, first, of making a careful study of the curricula of a considerable number of high schools for the years just preceding the issuance of the report in 1895, for the purpose of determining how fully they coincided with the specific recommendations of the report; and, second, repeating the study in all its details at a period ten years later.

If conditions more generally coincided with the recommendations in 1905 than in 1895, it would be logical to assume either that the advice of the committee had been followed, or that the members of the committee were good educational prophets and foresaw the particular paths that were to be taken by educational progress; either would be creditable to the committee. For the earlier period of the study eighty schools were covered: thirty-five in the eastern section of the country, twenty-five in the Middle West, and ten each in the South and far West. For the period a decade later the number

of schools was one hundred and sixty: forty-nine being in the East, forty-six in the Middle West, thirty in the South, and thirty-five in the far West.

Neither these numbers nor the particular schools studied were the result of arbitrary choice, but in most instances of dire necessity. Every available course of study for the years 1892 to 1894 was considered, and this was essentially true for the period ten years later. So far as possible, the same schools were considered at both periods; but, as indicated by the figures, many more schools were included in the later than in the early study. This was that errors due to accidental conditions might be reduced to a minimum. I have not thought it necessary in this paper to give the names of the particular schools studied, but will say that the list includes the high schools of nearly all the larger cities of the country; and that none of the smallest schools are covered is suggested by the fact that only those issuing printed courses of study are included. The part of the study covered by this paper has to do only with those recommendations of the special subcommittees which bear upon the high-school curriculum.

LATIN

The more important recommendations of the subcommittee on this subject were:

1. A full four-year course in Latin.
2. The use of some introductory reading-book before taking up Cæsar.
3. The discontinuation of the study of the *Bucolics* of Vergil.
4. That if Cicero were read before Vergil, only the orations against Catiline be studied then; next Vergil's *Æneid*, and later the more difficult writings of Cicero.

The accompanying table shows the conditions disclosed for the beginning and the end of the ten-year period.

As may be seen from a glance at the table, the recommendations of the committee seem to have carried weight. The percentage of schools offering four years of Latin increased from 46 to 80. The percentage using an introductory reading-book was raised from 10 to 46. In the East and South Ovid, Sallust, and Nepos shared the honor with *Viri Romæ*, while in the Middle West the latter and other similar compilations were preferred. The use of the

	1894	1904
Schools with four-year course in Latin.....	46%	80%
Schools with three-year course in Latin	42	20
Schools with two-year course in Latin	12	0
With introductory books to Cæsar	10	44
With <i>Bucolics</i>	26	16
Order—		
a) 1. Cicero }	25	17
2. Vergil }		
3. Cicero }		
b) 1. Cicero }	38	70
2. Vergil }		
c) Vergil }	32	13
Cicero }		

Bucolics was largely reduced—the East seems to have been the only part of the country in which they were in vogue—and the trend was in the direction of the use of Cicero and Vergil, in that order. As to the other recommendations of the committee, which were of a more general character or had to do with details of instruction, little could be told from a study of printed curricula. In schools, however, where less than four years were devoted to the subject it was seldom begun in the first year at either period of the study, so that the recommendation that it be commenced not later than the age of fourteen years is quite generally disregarded. Prose composition seems not to be as generally emphasized as the committee suggests, though when given, it was usually in connection with reading. In two schools, however, for the later study, it comprised all the work in Latin for a term.

ENGLISH

The specific recommendations of the committee are:

1. That the subject of English be taught for five hours a week for the full four-year course in the high school.
2. That three-fifths of this time be spent upon the literature; i. e., three hours per week for the full four years.
3. That three-tenths of the time be devoted to English composition; i. e., two hours per week for the first two years and one hour for the last two years.
4. That one twentieth of the time be devoted to formal rhetoric; i. e., one hour per week for the third year.
5. That the same amount of time be spent upon grammar, but that it come the fourth year.

A study of the curricula of the various schools discloses the following facts as bearing upon these recommendations.

For the period of the early nineties 52 per cent. of the schools were offering the full four years of English, while ten years later the percentage had increased to 68. These figures do not, however, fully show the increase in the amount of English taught, since at the earlier period but 12 per cent. offered more than three years, but less than four years, while for the later period the percentage had increased to 32, giving a full 100 per cent. of the schools with more than three years of English—certainly an encouraging showing.

In the case of the second recommendation we find the tendency in opposition to the advice of the committee, the change being from 30 to 19 per cent. for the three-year period, based upon the number of schools complying. The decrease is not, however, due to a lessening of the number of schools offering more than two years of work in the literature of the subject, but to its arrangement in the course, the tendency being to throw it more completely into the later years of the course. On a time basis alone the tendency is in the direction of compliance with the recommendation, since at the beginning of the period studied but 21 per cent. were offering between 400 and 480 hours—the latter figure being the amount recommended—while at its close the percentage was 55.

The third recommendation is also repudiated in its details by the schools, though it is probable that the difficulty in many instances in distinguishing between composition and rhetoric in the printed courses of study should be taken into consideration. At the close of the period, however, but 8 per cent. of the schools were complying with the recommendation fully, though at its beginning the number was considerably greater. There is, however, a general increase in the number of schools teaching English composition under that name (68 per cent. in 1894, 84 per cent. in 1904), and the amount of time devoted to it is greater. It is both in the matter of the distribution of the subject throughout the course, and in the eighty hours in excess of a single year, that the schools fail to comply with the committee's recommendations. When the entire time of one or more years is devoted to the study of literature, as is true in many instances, the composition is similarly treated, in this

way violating the recommendation for both subjects. That the time devoted to composition is increasing is, however, shown by the fact that at the beginning of the period studied but 16 per cent. of the schools were giving more than a year, but less than one and one-fifth, while at the end 80 per cent. were doing so.

The fourth recommendation shows but little influence upon the schools, roughly 20 per cent. complying at each of the periods studied. Generally speaking, the discrepancy comes from the fact that more rhetoric is offered than was the wish of the committee. In fact, 0.7 per cent. of a year was the average time devoted to the study at the end of the period, in the face of the committee's recommendation of 0.2 per cent. There had been, moreover, a slight increase during the decade.

Little can be said regarding the fifth recommendation. Only a little more than one-third of the schools studied offered grammar as a separate subject, and the percentage had changed but slightly throughout the period.

On the whole, the recommendations of the subcommittee in English seem not to have had a great effect, unless the increase in total time devoted to the subject can be ascribed to it. It must, however, be said that the recommendations were very specific, and it is perhaps not strange that the details have not been followed.

OTHER MODERN LANGUAGES

The committee strongly urged the beginning of such foreign languages as German and French in the grammar grades with pupils of, roughly, ten years of age. Since the conditions were not covered by the printed statements in the high-school course of study, I have nothing to present that bears upon them.

The more important recommendations bearing upon the high-school course in modern language are as follows:

1. If the classics are begun in the high school, modern languages should not be commenced the first year.
2. Otherwise the first modern language should be begun the first year and continued throughout the course.
3. Under the same conditions, the second modern language should be begun the second year and continued.
4. No two foreign languages should be begun the same year.

As to the time devoted to the subjects of German and French—and no other modern language was offered by a sufficient number of schools to warrant generalization—the following table gives the particulars:

GERMAN

	1894	1904
Percentage of schools offering two years.....	34	25
Percentage of schools offering three years.....	33	36
Percentage of schools offering four years.....	33	23
Percentage beginning in the first high-school year or earlier...	48	47
Percentage beginning in the second high-school year.....	30	41
Percentage beginning in the third high-school year.....	22	12

FRENCH

	1904	1904
Percentage of schools offering two years.....	40	40
Percentage of schools offering three years.....	32	40
Percentage of schools offering four years.....	28	20
Percentage beginning in the first high-school year or earlier....	42	44
Percentage beginning in the second high-school year.....	36	44
Percentage beginning in the third high-school year.....	22	12

Without discussing the recommendations of the committee individually and in detail, it is plain at a glance at the table that in some very important respects the trend is in opposition to them. This seems due very largely to the development of the elective system in the high school—a move that could not have been foreseen fully at the time the report was written—and also to the introduction of many new subjects which sadly jostled the older ones.

The first thing that strikes the attention is that both for German and French fewer schools offered a four-year course in 1904 than in 1894. Secondly, in spite of the fact that most schools begin Latin in the first year, in which case the committee strongly urges postponement of the modern languages, more schools begin French in that year and about as many German, at the end of the period studied as at its beginning. Thirdly, a larger percentage of the schools begin both the modern languages in the same year—the second—another violation of the recommendation. It should be said, however, that this need not be the case, and probably is not for the individual student—and that, of course, is what the com-

mittee had in mind. The fact is that French and German are both very generally offered as electives in the second year, either to be taken that year and the other the next. In the fourth place, the problem of the fourth modern language was not found to figure prominently, only a limited number of schools offering other than the two mentioned.

MATHEMATICS

The subcommittee on mathematics devoted much of its time to a discussion of the general pedagogy of the subject, yet made a number of specific recommendations:

1. Algebra should be taught throughout the first year and one-half time the second and third.
2. Geometry should be given one-half time for the second and third years.
3. Trigonometry and advanced algebra, one-half time each the fourth year.
4. Bookkeeping and commercial arithmetic, if taught at all, should be optional with algebra the second and third years.

Neither at the beginning nor at the end of the decade covered by my study was the first recommendation of the committee complied with by any considerable number of schools. At its end 31 per cent. of the schools were offering the suggested two years of algebra, while only 15 per cent. were doing so at the beginning, but its arrangement in the course was not that of the committee. It was usually the first two years for full time, or the first full year, with half time the second and fourth. However, the time devoted to algebra was increased about 33 per cent. during the decade.

The committee makes no distinction between plane and solid geometry in its assignment of time. For these two divisions of the subject the place in the curriculum at the beginning and end of the decade studied is as follows:

	FIRST YEAR		SECOND YEAR		THIRD YEAR		FOURTH YEAR		SCHOOLS OFFERING	
	1894	1904	1894	1904	1894	1904	1894	1904	1894	1904
Plane.....	2%	5%	61%	65%	40%	56%	2%	10%	100%	100%
Solid.....	0	0	7	3	28	31	9	32	43	63

From the figures it is evident that neither subject has a very definitely fixed place in the curriculum. However, in general it

would seem as if the committee had carried weight, for we find the plane geometry pretty generally distributed throughout the second and third years, which were the years recommended. The great increase in solid geometry in the fourth year was not suggested in the report. In the particular schools in which this is done the subject is frequently made an elective with trigonometry and astronomy. Trigonometry was in 1894 offered in 23 per cent. of the schools studied; in 1904, in 44 per cent. It was almost without exception given in the fourth year. Both these facts are in accordance with the committee's report. Similar percentages for advanced algebra are 6 and 26.

The fourth recommendation of the committee had to do with bookkeeping and commercial arithmetic. With the advent of commercial courses these subjects have lost any close affiliation with mathematics which they may once have had, and a discussion of them in connection with the committee report seems out of place.

PHYSICS, CHEMISTRY, AND ASTRONOMY

Of the twenty-two specific recommendations of this committee, but few are of such a character as to lend themselves readily to the method of this study, and are not considered. Those covered are condensed as follows:

1. That physics be taught throughout the last high-school year (200 hours).
2. That chemistry be similarly taught during the third year.
3. That sixty exercises in astronomy be offered as an elective course. A minority report opposes the order of physics and chemistry as stated.

As regards the first recommendation, physics was taught in practically all the schools studied both at the beginning and end of the decade (97 per cent. in 1894; 100 per cent. in 1904). With comparatively few exceptions, too, it was given for an entire year, those exceptions, strangely enough, being in the eastern division of the country. That, however, was only true for the earlier period.

The great variation, both among the schools themselves and from the committee's recommendation, has to do with the exact place in the course that the subject comes. The committee urges the last year of the high-school course; yet that is almost the only year in which it is not found. At the beginning of the period studied the subject was pretty evenly divided between the second and third

years of the course. In by far the majority of the schools physics preceded chemistry, and its place seemed to be determined by the year in which the latter subject came. When chemistry was a third-year subject, physics was a second-year one, with the same relation between the subject in the fourth and third years.

CHEMISTRY

Of the schools covered by my study a smaller percentage were teaching chemistry in 1904 than in 1894, the percentage for those two dates being 66 and 74. This decrease is not, however, strange, nor is it portentous. The period covered by the study is pre-eminently one of increased stress upon laboratory method and laboratory equipment; and doubtless many schools which had been teaching both physics and chemistry with mediocre equipment decided to put one on a proper basis, dropping the other temporarily. This study carried on for another decade would no doubt show that chemistry was coming to its own again.

In the matter of time devoted to the subject, one full year, with very few exceptions, was the constant throughout the decade.

As to the place of the subject in the course little more can be said than that chemistry usually follows physics, coming even then in the majority of schools not later than the third year. It must be said, however, that during the decade that separates the two particular periods studied, the elective system had taken its grip on the high schools, and it is much more difficult to tell just when the science subjects are taken at the later date than at the earlier. In many schools where the subjects of physics and chemistry are electives conditions accidental to the curriculum determine largely the order in which they are taken. In such schools the subjects are usually third-year electives, the one not taken that year following the next. It was impossible to tell from the printed courses of study just what the order of precedence usually was.

On the whole, it would seem as if the minority report of Professor Waggener was more nearly prophetic of the development of physics and chemistry in the high-school curriculum than was the general report. The recommendation of the committee regarding astronomy seems not to have carried weight, since 63 per cent. of the schools

studied for 1894 offered the subject, while but 31 per cent. did so a decade later.

NATURAL HISTORY

The subcommittee on this group of subjects discussed at length the importance of introducing the work in the lower grades, and formally recommended for the high-school years:

1. One full year devoted to botany or zoölogy (not to both together).
2. One half-year devoted to physiology, the work to come late in the course.

For these subjects the conditions are shown somewhat in detail, both as they were found to be taught in the lower grades and in the high school, in the following table:

	BOTANY AND ZOÖLOGY		PHYSIOLOGY	
	1894	1904	1894	1904
Percentage offering in grades.....	42	74	74	93
Percentage of those offering beginning in grades I-IV..	78	97	60	80
Percentage of those offering beginning in grades V-VIII	22	3	31	15
Percentage continuing throughout.....	33	72	40	58
Percentage giving two periods a week.....	17	75	60	48
Percentage giving one period a week.....	83	25	40	52
Percentage giving oral lessons.....	94	91	69	78
Percentage using textbook.....	6	9	60	68
Percentage offering in high school.....	81	77	81	57
Percentage of those offering giving one full year.....	3	12	..	..
Percentage of those offering giving one-half year or less	97	88	..	..
Percentage offering only botany.....	48	30	..	..
Percentage offering only zoölogy.....	9	6	..	..
Percentage offering both botany and zoölogy.....	43	64	..	..
Percentage giving one-third year.....	..	..	23	31
Percentage giving one-half year or more.....	..	..	77	69
Percentage giving in first half of course.....	..	..	91	86
Percentage giving in second half of course.....	..	..	9	14

This table, so far as it refers to botany and zoölogy, considers each separately. So far as the work of the high school is concerned, it shows very plainly that the full year of work in one or the other of the subjects was neither generally offered at the time the committee presented its report, nor was it so offered ten years later. There was a slight change for the better during the decade, but at its close only one school in eight was complying with the recommendation. A single term—or, where the semester plan is in vogue, one-half year—is the usual amount. Where but a single one of the

two subjects is offered, the preference is plainly that of the committee, viz., botany. The number offering both botany and zoölogy increased during the decade from 43 to 64 per cent.

There has been a marked decrease in the schools offering physiology, only a little more than one-half studied for the later period including it in the curriculum. It, moreover, remains firmly fixed in the earlier years of the high-school course, which again is contrary to the recommendation of the committee.

HISTORY, CIVIL GOVERNMENT, AND POLITICAL ECONOMY

There is nothing doubtful nor equivocal about the recommendations of the subcommittee on these subjects. So far as they apply to the work of the high school, they are as follows:

1. History should be taught during each of the four years for three periods a week.
2. American history should be included (third high-school year suggested).
3. French history should be included (first high-school year suggested).
4. English history should be included (second high-school year).
5. The fourth high-school year should be devoted to "an intensive study" of some particular period or periods. Greek and Roman history is urged for the year preceding entrance to the high schools, though in a six-year program for historical study it is placed in first year after entrance.

My study of the schools discloses the fact that neither at the time of the appearance of the report nor ten years later were these recommendations even approximated by the actual conditions. At the earlier date but one or two of the schools studied were offering four years of history, and at the later date but 14 per cent.

In 1894 the average time devoted to the subject was 1.3 years; in 1904 it was 2.5. These figures show an encouraging increase, but by no means a compliance with the committee's wish.

The percentage of schools offering the particular divisions of historical study covered by the report, as well as some others not covered, together with the amount of time devoted to each at the beginning and the end of the period covered, are shown by the accompanying table.

There is a marked increase in the number of schools offering American history (57 to 86 per cent.), but at neither end of the period studied was it very generally at the particular place in the course

	1894		1904	
	Per Cent. Offering	Length of Year	Per Cent. Offering	Length of Year
American	57	0.7	86	0.64
French	0	0.0	7	0.50
English	39	0.5	51	0.66
"Intensive"	0	...	5	1.00
Greek	47	0.5	57	0.50
Roman	50	0.5	57	0.50
General	46	1.0	61	1.00

nor in the amount suggested by the committee. In fact, the percentages are but 10 and 17 for the full third year of American history at the extremes of the decade. More frequently the subject came in the first year of the high-school course. French history, at least under that name, hardly figures at all in the course of study, being taught in but 7 per cent. of the schools, and in no one of these for more than one-half year.

The showing for English history is much better. In 1894 about two-fifths of the schools offered the subject for one-half year each, while in 1904 the number had increased to one-half, and the time to two-thirds of a year. At the later date 9 per cent. of the schools were complying in full with the committee's recommendation—i. e., were offering English history for the full second year of the school course. None had been doing so at the earlier date. It is plain from the table that the schools are not yet ready for the intensive study of history urged by the committee; at least, if they are, the fact is not evident from the printed courses of study. It is, of course, possible that the recommendation has had its influence upon the methods of presentation throughout, but this my study would fail to show.

The most discouraging facts of all, from the standpoint of the committee's report, are disclosed by the showing of Greek, Roman, and general history. No one of these subjects was recommended by the committee, except as has already been noted for the first two. Yet at the beginning of the period covered by my study nearly two-thirds of the total time given to history was given to them, and at the close of the period approximately one-half. This, to be sure, shows a change for the better, but none of great magnitude. It is

possible that the slight influence of the entire sub-report on history is partially ascribable to the fact that not long after its appearance the most admirable report of the Committee of Nine fell into the hands of the teachers, thus at least dividing attention. However, at many important points the two committees are in agreement, and their combined effect should have been great.

Under the heading "political economy" the committee made but the single recommendation that the subject be not taught as such in the high school, "but that economic subjects be treated with other pertinent subjects."

The study discloses the facts that in 1894 the subject was taught in 47 per cent. of the schools studied, and ten years later in 43 per cent. At both periods it was taught generally for one-half year during the fourth year of the course. Two schools, however, gave the full year to it. In only one school was it plain that the recommendation that economic subjects be "treated with other pertinent subjects" was being carried out.

The committee offered the following resolution with reference to the teaching of civil government:

That civil government in the high school should be taught by using a text-book as a basis, with collateral reading and topical work, and observation of the city or town or state in which the pupils live, and with comparisons between American and foreign systems of government.

Regarding the method and content of the work I have nothing to say. As bearing on the first part of the recommendation: In 1894 civics was taught for a full year in no one of the schools studied; for two-thirds of a year, in one school; for one-half year, in 53 per cent.; and for one-third year, in 13 per cent. Ten years later one school offered the subject for a full year; 53 per cent., one-half year; 10 per cent., one-third year. At neither period was there any marked uniformity as to the exact place in the course, though the two extremes—i. e., the first year and the fourth year—were in the lead with the advantage slightly in favor of the latter.

GEOGRAPHY

In this subject the specific recommendations capable of the kind of treatment attempted by this study are as follows:

1. That physical geography be taught in the grammar grades.

2. That physiography be taught in the latter half of the high-school course.
3. That geology be elective in the last year of the high-school course.

The facts bearing upon these three recommendations were found to be as follows:

	7th or 8th Grade	1st Year	2d Year	3d Year	4th Year	Total
Physical geography—1894.....	20%	53%	27%	...	...	100%
1904.....	6	20	12	...	...	38
Physiography—1894.....	0	0	0	...	...	...
1904.....	...	30	18	...	6%	54
Geology—1894.....	...	...	...	28%	46	74
1904.....	...	...	5	...	33	38

From the table it may be seen that the subject of physical geography—at least under that name—seems to be going out of the school curriculum. It must be borne in mind, however, that the nomenclature of the schools is not very precise, and it may be that in the decrease in this subject and the increase in physiography we have nothing more than a change in name. Yet it is certain that the committee's recommendation that physical geography be taught in the grades was disregarded by the schools studied, for there is shown a decrease from 20 to 6 per cent. offering the subject in the later grammar grades.

The term "physiography" did not appear upon the programs of any of the schools at the earlier period, though more than one-half the whole number were offering it at the later. The first and second high-school years mark its place in the course.

In spite of the committee's recommendation, geology, too, has fallen a martyr to the over-crowdedness of the curriculum, 74 per cent. of the schools offering it in 1894, to 43 per cent. ten years later. This falling off was largely in the case of schools that had offered the subject in the third year, though the fourth year, the time particularly recommended by the committee, felt the effects of the shrinkage. On the whole, the decade studied showed a material lessening in the number of schools offering any work whatsoever in the subjects covered by the recommendations of this subcommittee.

With the exception of the subcommittee on Greek, which subject was taught in so few of the schools studied as to make generaliza-

tions of little value, this completes the report. And if any further deductions are worth while, the reader is in a position to make them. For my own part, I must confess that the figures prompt me to answer in the negative the question propounded in the earlier portion of the paper. The report of the Committee of Ten seems not to have influenced directly to a marked degree the curriculum of public high schools. This does not mean that it has not fully justified itself through directing thought to the problems of the curriculum and making those problems, so to speak, conscious of themselves; but with the shaping of its details it has had little to do. In fact, more of the specific recommendations of the committee have been actually violated by the trend of high-school organization, or have proved inert, than have been followed. It is difficult to say whether this fact is portentous of good or of evil. It certainly means that we teachers, as a class, are not apt at taking advice—even good advice. But may it not mean, on the other hand, that we have reached a point where the particular problems of our own schools are being thought out on the spot? Schools, like children, do not come most fully unto their own, if advice be too plentiful, or directions from without too incisive. And it may be that the adolescent vagaries even of a high-school system would better be lived through until they find the cure within themselves, than that the external evidence of them be suppressed through too much wisdom from without.